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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/807,190	03/24/2004	Takeshi Yamamoto	57810-091	3715

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600 13th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20005-3096

EXAMINER

TRINH, THANH TRUC

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1795

MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
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05/13/2009

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/807,190

Applicant(s)

YAMAMOTO ET AL.

Examiner

THANH-TRUC TRINH

Art Unit

1795

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 17 February 2009.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3,4,6-13,15,16 and 18-22 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3,4,6-13,15,16 and 18-22 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 2/11/09, 11/18/08
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 5) ☐ ~~Notice of Informal Patent Application~~
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Remark

1. Claims 1, 3-4, 6-13, 15-16 and 18-22 are pending in the application.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
 2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
 3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
 4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.
2. Claims 1, 3-4, 6-11, 13 and 15-16, 18-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sakata et al. (US Patent Application Publication 20010008295) 6133522) in view of Kloppel et al. (PGPub 20030170449) and Kataoka et al. (US Patent 6133522), and further in view of Minoru (JP 2002-305212 submitted by Applicant, a machine translation is provided)

Regarding claims 1, 6-7, 9-11, 13, 18 and 20- 21, as seen in Figures 1-2, Sakata et al. teaches a photovoltaic device comprising a photovoltaic element comprising a first

conductivity type of single crystalline silicon semiconductor layer (1 as seen in Figures 1-2); a substantially intrinsic non-single-crystalline semiconductor layer (or i-type a-Si layer 2 in Figure 1, 2 and 7 in Figure 2) formed on the first conductivity semiconductor layer; a transparent conductive oxide film (transparent electrode 5 made of ITO, or SnO_2 added In_2O_3 in Figure 1, 5 and 10 in Figure 2 - See paragraphs 0036, 0062), and a collector electrode of Ag (See paragraph 0036). As seen in Figures 1-2, Sakata et al. teaches a surface of the crystalline semiconductor layer (1) is textured so that irregularities of the crystalline semiconductor is higher than the thickness of the transparent conductive oxide film (5) of 600-1500 Angstroms (or 60 nm - 150 nm - See paragraph 0036). Therefore it would have been obvious to have the irregularities of the crystalline semiconductor layer higher than the height of the irregularities on the surface of the transparent conductive oxide film.

The differences between Sakata et al. and the instant claims are the requirements of the transparent conductive oxide (ITO) film having an arithmetic mean deviation of the profile (or mean surface roughness) of not more than about 2 nm; a paste electrode formed on the transparent oxide film, wherein the paste electrode contains at least 60 percent by weight and not more than 80 percent by weight of epoxy resin; and an electric wire connected to the paste electrode.

Kataoka et al. teaches a collector electrode (505) formed on the transparent conductive oxide of ITO (504), wherein the silver collector electrode in a form of paste electrode of silver and a resin material (epoxy). (See col. 9 lines 10-29). Kataoka et al. also teaches a copper tab or a tin foil (506a) attaching to the paste electrode 505. (See

col. 9 lines 30-37 or col. 14 lines 37-47). It is the Examiner's position that the copper tab or tin foil is an electric wire. It is known that a silver conductive paste containing about 60-80 wt% by weight of epoxy resin (or weight ratio of epoxy to urethane is between 10:2 to 5-10:5) in the blending of epoxy and urethane resin. (See Minoru, paragraph 0011 and claim 2).

Kloppel et al. teach the transparent conductive oxide film of ITO having an arithmetic mean deviation of the profile (or surface roughness) of less than 1 nm. (See paragraph [0013]). Applicant's disclosure states that "the contact angle of water on the surface of the ITO film is at least about 40° and not more than about 74° when the arithmetic mean deviation of the profile (Ra) of the ITO film is in the range of at least 0.5 nm to not more than about 2 nm" (Specification, page 35 line 23 – Page 36 line 8 and Figure 8). As the surface roughness of transparent conductive oxide film (ITO) in the range of less than 1 nm and, the Examiner considers that the contact angle of water with respect to the surface of the transparent conductive oxide film is at least about 40° and not more than about 74°.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify to device of Sakata et al. by having the paste electrode of silver and epoxy resin and the electric wire as taught by Kataoka et al. with the silver conductive paste containing 60-80 wt% of epoxy in the mixture of epoxy and urethane as taught by Minoru, and the surface roughness of ITO less than 1 nm (or a contact angle of at least about 40° and not more than about 74° with respect to water) as taught by Kloppel et al; because Kataoka et al. teaches the electric wire such as copper tab

506a is used as an output terminal (See col. 9 lines 30-37 of Kataoka et al.), the silver conductive paste is suitable for collector electrode and equivalent to silver collector electrode (See col. 9 lines 10-29 of Kataoka et al.), wherein the silver conductive paste containing 60-80wt% epoxy would have low stress nature and heat-resistant reliability as taught by Minoru (See paragraph 0024 of Minoru); and because Kloppel et al. teaches it would avoid spikes by having the roughness of the ITO less than 1 nm, thereby enhancing conductivity and adhesion. (See paragraph [0005]-[0006]). In such combination, the irregularities of the surface of the crystalline semiconductor layer (1), which is higher than the thickness of the transparent conductive oxide of 60-150 nm, would have been obviously higher than the irregularities of the transparent conductive oxide of height of less than 1 nm (or the surface roughness of 1nm).

Regarding claims 3 and 15, as seen in Figures 1-2, Sakata et al. teaches the photovoltaic element further comprising a second conductivity type non-single-crystalline semiconductor layer (or p-type a-Si layer 4) formed on the intrinsic non-single-crystalline (2) and the transparent conductive oxide film (5) is formed on the second conductivity type non-single-crystalline semiconductor layer (4).

Regarding claims 4 and 16, as seen in Figure 2, Sakata et al. teaches the intrinsic non-single-crystalline semiconductor layer (i-type a-Si layers 2 and 7) includes first (2) and second (7) intrinsic non-single-crystalline semiconductors formed on the upper and lower surfaces of the first conductivity type single crystalline semiconductor layer (1), respectively; a second conductivity type non-single crystalline (p-type a-Si layer 4) formed on the upper surface of the first intrinsic non-single-crystalline

semiconductor layer (2); a first conductivity type fourth non-single crystalline semiconductor layer (n-type a-Si semiconductor layer 9); and the transparent conductive oxide film (5 and 10 as seen in Figure 2, paragraph 0062) including a first transparent conductive oxide film (5) formed on the upper surface of the third non-single crystalline semiconductor layer (4) and a second transparent conductive oxide film (10) formed on the lower surface of the fourth non-single crystalline semiconductor layer (9) .

Regarding claims 8 and 19, Kloppel et al. teach the content of indium oxide in the ITO is 90% and that of the tin oxide is 10% (See paragraphs 0008 or 0027). It was found that the content of Sn in the transparent conductive oxide film is about 5% by weight.

3. Claims 12 and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sakata et al. in view of Kloppel et al., Kataoka et al. and Minoru, and further in view of Morizane et al. (US Application Publication 20010045505)

Sakata et al. in view of Kloppel et al., Kataoka et al. and Minoru teaches a photovoltaic device as applied to claims 1, 3, 5-11, 12, 15-19 and 21 above, wherein Kataoka et al. describes a plurality of the photovoltaic elements provided at a prescribed interval and connected in series by electric wires (copper tab and tin foil), wherein the photovoltaic element includes a first paste electrode (formed on the upper surface of photovoltaic element. (See Figures 1 and 5, col. 14 lines 37-47).

Sakata et al. in view of Kloppel et al., Kataoka et al. and Minoru does not teach a second paste electrode formed on the lower surface of the photovoltaic element.

Morizane et al. teaches using a second collector electrode (18). (See Figure 1 and paragraph [0052])

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the device of Sakata et al. in view of Kloppel et al., Kataoka et al. and Minoru by utilizing the second collector electrode as taught by Morizane et al., because it would enable light to enter from both front and rear surfaces. (See paragraph [0051]). In such combination, it would certainly have been obvious that the second collector electrode can be a paste collector electrode like the first collector electrode 505 of Kataoka et al. It also would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to connect the first end of the electric wire (copper tab or tin foil) to the first paste electrode of one cell and the second end of the electric wire to the second paste electrode of another cell as taught by Morizane et al., because in this way the photovoltaic elements are connected in series as taught by Kataoka et al.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1 and 3-22 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP

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§ 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to **THANH-TRUC TRINH** whose telephone number is (571)272-6594. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30 am - 5:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Nam Nguyen can be reached on 571-272-1342. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Nam X Nguyen/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 1753

TT
4/28/2009